



SJDAWC NEWS

NUMBER 37, 2021 SPRING EDITION

SIR JAMES DUNN ANIMAL WELFARE CENTRE *at the Atlantic Veterinary College*



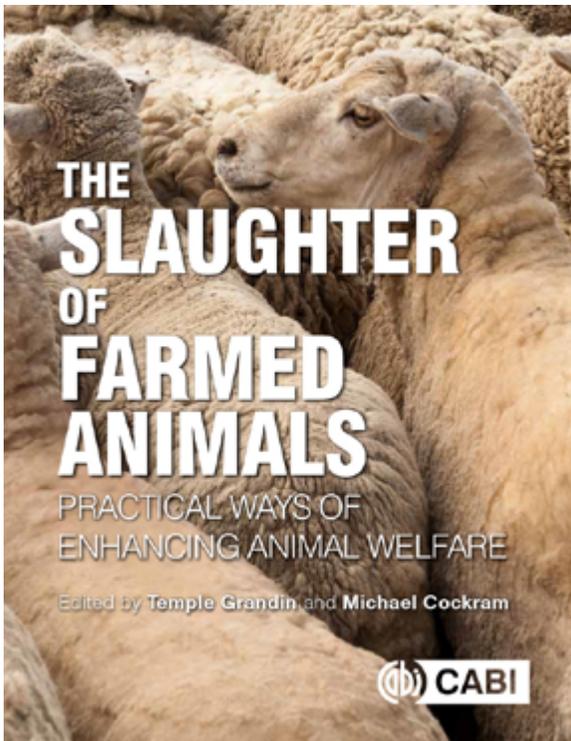
PROMOTING ANIMAL WELFARE THROUGH RESEARCH, SERVICE, AND EDUCATION



UNIVERSITY
of Prince Edward
ISLAND



NEW BOOK ON THE WELFARE OF ANIMALS AT SLAUGHTER



Dr. Michael Cockram, Chair in Animal Welfare, co-edited *The Slaughter of Farmed Animals: Practical ways of enhancing animal welfare* with Dr. Temple Grandin, Professor of Animal Science, Colorado State University. Published in 2020 by CABI, the book uses evidence-based scientific studies to provide practical guidance to enhance the welfare of cattle, pigs, sheep, and poultry at slaughter. Dr. Cockram wrote three chapters: “Welfare issues at slaughter,” “Condition of animals on arrival at

the abattoir and their management during lairage,” and “Approaches to legislation and enforcement to minimize welfare issues at slaughter.” He and Dr. Grandin jointly authored a chapter titled “The use of abattoir data to provide information on the welfare of livestock on the farm and during transport.” Dr. Grandin wrote nine other chapters, and other international experts another five. For more information, visit <https://www.cabi.org/bookshop/book/9781789240573/>.



Dr. Katy Proudfoot

ANIMAL WELFARE IN PRACTICE SYMPOSIUM

The sixteenth annual symposium was held virtually on March 4 and 6, 2021. The theme of the symposium was animal abuse and neglect, including the link between cruelty to animals and violence against people.

The symposium kicked off with an evening talk from Inspector Leslie Hadfield, social sciences learning manager with the Atlantic Police Academy, Holland College. Inspector Hadfield explained the research linking animal abuse to violence against people, often referred to as “The Violence Link.”

“Evidence-based research conducted over decades has established that where there is animal abuse, there is a high probability that a violent crime has been, or will be, committed on a person,” she said. For example, researchers have shown that youth who engage in repeated acts of animal cruelty are more likely to engage in violent crimes as adults, including robbery, sexual assault, aggravated assault, and murder.

Inspector Hadfield described the cycle of domestic violence and provided examples of how animals are used in the cycle. For example, abusers may hurt animals as a way to control their partner, and victims may stay with an abuser or not report abusive situations to protect their pets. Children may be especially vulnerable, as

they may experience violence against themselves, a parent and/or a pet, often resulting in long-term consequences to their mental health.

Inspector Hadfield concluded her presentation by calling on people from different professions to come together to help “break the cycle.” Veterinarians, social workers, police officers, and others are encouraged to find out how they each contribute to preventing violence against both animals and people. To help facilitate conversations between different professions, PEI has started a “Violence Link Initiative.”

If you are interested in being involved in the PEI Violence Link Initiative, please email violencelinkpei@gmail.com



Atticus and Inspector Leslie Hadfield

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Spring has finally arrived! We had a very productive winter at the SJDAWC, despite some restrictions due to COVID-19. Our Animal Welfare in Practice Symposium went off without a hitch in March, making it the first time the SJDAWC has hosted a fully virtual meeting. Read on to learn more about the take-home messages from this year’s symposium.

We also have some new graduate students to introduce to you. They are doing exciting animal welfare research ranging from reducing fear in dogs during veterinary visits and assessing horse welfare to providing hiding spaces for newborn dairy calves. A huge congratulations to our team that participated in the virtual Animal Welfare Assessment contest this year and the various SJDAWC award winners.

We welcome your feedback at animalwelfare@upei.ca. Please contact us at animalwelfare@upei.ca to receive the newsletter (in full colour!) by email and to be added to our email list for occasional upcoming events.

To learn how you can support the Centre, please go to upei.ca/awc or write to:

The Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre
Atlantic Veterinary College
University of Prince Edward Island
550 University Avenue
Charlottetown, PEI, Canada C1A 4P3

All donations are tax deductible.

KEY TAKE-HOME MESSAGES FROM THE SYMPOSIUM

RECENT ADVANCEMENTS IN CRUELTY INVESTIGATIONS AND ASSESSING ANIMAL SUFFERING IN CANADA

Dr. Rebecca Ledger, Animal Behaviour and Welfare Scientist, Animal Behaviour and Welfare Consulting, Langara College

Using her experience as an expert witness in animal cruelty cases, Dr. Ledger brought new insights into assessing animal suffering in Canada. Traditionally, terms like “suffering” and “distress,” which are often used in legislation, are not well defined. Due to a lack of definition, many expert witnesses in court cases have relied primarily on physical signs of suffering in animals, such as signs of injury caused by an abusive act (e.g., broken bones or bruising) or obvious signs of neglect (e.g., emaciation or matted fur).

According to research, suffering and distress include much more than physical harm. For example, an animal can suffer emotionally, without any physical signs of injury. Assessing emotions in animals is difficult, but Dr. Ledger described some behavioural cues that provide strong evidence an animal has suffered. She then described a framework, called the “Five Domains Model,” that has helped her provide evidence in court cases that an animal has experienced emotional suffering.

VETERINARY RESPONSE TO SUSPECTED ANIMAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Dr. Carolyn Sanford, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture and Land, Government of Prince Edward Island, and Dr. Alice Crook, Adjunct Professor, Atlantic Veterinary College

Drs. Crook and Sanford joined forces to discuss the veterinarian’s role in animal abuse and neglect cases. Dr. Crook explained that veterinarians become involved in these cases in a number of different ways, including suspecting and reporting abuse in a patient, assisting with investigations, serving as an expert witness in a court case of abuse or neglect, or providing foster care for pets of victims escaping abuse.

Dr. Sanford described the veterinarian’s duty to report cases of animal abuse and neglect through their veterinary oath, the PEI Veterinary Profession Act, and the PEI Animal Welfare Act. She then discussed the National Farm Animal Care Council’s Codes of Practice, which can be useful to help veterinarians determine if they see something “not right” in a patient.

Both Drs. Crook and Sanford stressed the importance of veterinarians reporting their suspicions, even if they are not certain if the patient is being abused or neglected. These cases are not straightforward, leading to many veterinarians failing to report their suspicions due to fear of losing their client, breaking client confidentiality, or not knowing how the process works. However, reporting these cases is an important step in stopping the cycle of abuse in both animals and people.

In PEI, suspected cases of animal abuse and neglect can be reported to the PEI Humane Society at info@peihumanesociety.com with the subject line “ATTN Animal Protection Officer,” or by calling 902-892-1190, ext. 21. They can also be reported to the provincial government at reg@gov.pe.ca or by calling 902-368-4880.

CASE STUDIES IN EXOTICS, COMPANION ANIMALS, AND EQUINE

Dr. Lara Cusack, Assistant Professor, Atlantic Veterinary College; Mike Gilbertson, Animal Protection Officer, PEI Humane Society; and Dr. Kathleen MacMillan, Assistant Professor, Atlantic Veterinary College

Dr. Lara Cusack, AVC Zoo, Exotic, and Wildlife Medicine Service, described signs of abuse and neglect in exotic pets such as birds, rabbits, and



reptiles. Many veterinarians do not have much experience working with these animals, so it may be difficult to tell when they have been abused. “You must know normal to recognize abnormal,” she said, encouraging veterinarians to seek out resources on each species to better understand when something is wrong.

Animal Protection Officer Mike Gilbertson discussed the role that he and the PEI Humane Society play in cases of animal cruelty. One of his duties is to enforce the provincial Animal Welfare Act. For example, if someone reports suspected animal abuse or neglect to the humane society, Mike and his team will interview witnesses and suspects, gather evidence, and determine the course of action on a case-by-case basis.

Dr. Kathleen MacMillan, AVC Ambulatory Equine Service, shared her experiences with cases of abuse and neglect in horses. Cases of neglect in horses often occur because the owner doesn’t recognize the problem, lacks resources to properly care for animals, or suffers from a mental illness. She emphasized that veterinarians are not alone in these cases; they have the support of local enforcement agencies, police, mental health experts, and other veterinarians.

The speakers’ powerpoint presentations are available at <https://awc.upei.ca/animal-welfare-in-practice/>

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SJDAWC

NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE SJDAWC

DR. MOLLY MILLS

Molly's research project focuses on the development and use of an on-farm welfare assessment tool for horse farms in Prince Edward Island. The assessment tool will be used to determine any animal welfare concerns on the farms and then provide the farm with feedback. The assessment will be repeated one year later to determine if horse owners used the feedback they were given to improve the welfare of their horses. The overall goal of the project is to promote better equine welfare on PEI and to design an effective assessment tool to evaluate equine welfare.

Supervisor: Dr. Kathleen MacMillan



Dr. Molly Mills

HANNAH SPITZER

Hannah began her MSc degree in January of 2021. Her research involves exploring newborn dairy calves' natural hiding behaviour in the first week of life and understanding how to reduce calves' stress by allowing for the expression of these behaviours in conventional indoor housing systems. Hannah is passionate about the welfare of all animals and has previously assisted with many animal welfare research projects through the University of British Columbia's Animal Welfare Program, where she completed her undergraduate degree.

Supervisor: Dr. Katy Proudfoot



Hannah Spitzer

DR. CAMILLE SQUAIR

During Camille's small animal internship at the Atlantic Veterinary College last year, she developed a short survey study that was intended to investigate pet owners' and veterinary professionals' awareness of and attitude toward low-stress handling within veterinary medicine. This experience further inspired the development of her master's research project entitled "Effects of veterinary handling on canine behaviour and physiology: Must we scare dogs?" This study will look to develop reliable measures of distress during routine exams and test whether targeted interventions of fear- and stress-reducing techniques can be shown to prevent that distress. This will be achieved by measuring both behavioural and physiological signs of fear and anxiety.

Supervisor: Dr. Karen L. Overall



Dr. Camille Squair

Information about all of our graduate students can be found on our website at <https://awc.upei.ca/graduate-students/>

PROJECTS FUNDED IN 2021

Each year the SJDAWC provides funding to support research and service projects that aim to improve the lives of animals in PEI and abroad. For the 2021 cycle, we funded four projects with a diverse array of topics related to animal welfare. For more information about this funding opportunity and previously funded projects, please visit our website at <https://awc.upei.ca/grant-competition/>

IDENTIFYING OPTIMAL EXPERIMENTER HANDLING AND FAMILIARIZATION PROTOCOLS THAT CAN BE UNIVERSALLY IMPLEMENTED TO IMPROVE LAB ANIMAL WELFARE

P Bernard, J Spears, L Bigelow

This new research project aims to develop an optimal and practical handling protocol that can be easily adapted and universally employed across all neurobehavioral laboratories. The goal of this research is to help reduce stress associated with common handling practices in laboratory rodents. This project will partially support the training of one PhD student (Logan Bigelow pictured below).



ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF HORSE WELFARE ON PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND THROUGH BENCHMARKING AND A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF HORSE CARETAKERS' DECISION-MAKING

C Ritter, K Proudfoot, K MacMillan, I Elsohaby, S McKenna

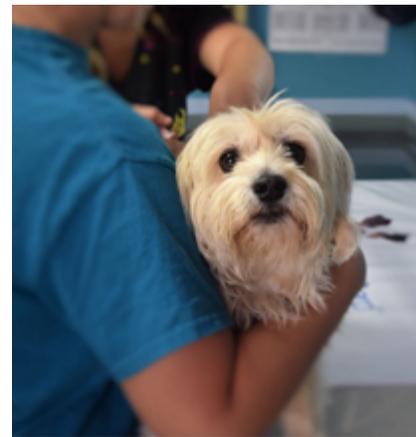
This new research project aims to evaluate the welfare of horses using indicators such as lameness, injuries, and stereotypic behaviours. Providing horse caretakers with farm-specific evaluations of these indicators in comparison to their peers (i.e., “benchmarking”) may motivate them to improve their horses’ welfare. Additional funding for this project comes from the Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP), administered through the PEI Department of Agriculture and Land. This project will partially support two master’s students (Dr. Molly Mills and incoming student Megan Ross).



EFFECTS OF VETERINARY HANDLING ON CANINE BEHAVIOUR AND PHYSIOLOGY: MUST WE SCARE DOGS?

K Overall, W Montelpare, K Proudfoot, C Squair

This new research project will provide veterinarians with evidence-based recommendations to enhance canine welfare during routine care. The objectives are to develop reliable measurements of distress in dogs during veterinary visits and determine interventions to reduce stress. This project will partially support the training of one master’s student (Dr. Camille Squair).



IMPROVING ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE OF PETS IN REMOTE NORTHERN CANADIAN COMMUNITIES 2021

J VanLeeuwen, M Hopson, C Gilroy in partnership with M Tuma with Vets Without Borders and S Kutz from the University of Calgary

This renewed service project aims to enable Veterinarians Without Borders to return to their partnered northern communities to broaden the project’s short- and long-term benefits in terms of types of activities and numbers of animals. Activities specifically related to the project objectives include veterinary telehealth, enhancement and expansion of temporary veterinary clinics, animal care training for residents, and first-aid and triage training for community animal health workers. This project is also funded by various other sources secured by Veterinarian’s Without Borders.



2020 AVMA ANIMAL WELFARE ASSESSMENT CONTEST

Karen Yetman, Nima Morady, and Lindsey Bailey, AVC's Class of 2023, participated in the veterinary division of the American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA) 20th annual Animal Welfare Assessment Contest, which took place virtually on November 20 and 21, 2020.

Hosted by the AVMA and North Carolina State University, the contest involved 176 participants, representing 32 universities and seven countries, who completed online assessments of the welfare of animals in different settings. A special congratulations goes to Karen for finishing first out of 46 students who competed in the veterinary division!

Students had to assess two different welfare scenarios, one comparing two turkey production facilities, and the other, two facilities where cheetahs live in captivity. Using science-based methods and reasoning, they had to determine which facility for each species had superior welfare and submit their decision to a judging panel. They then had to give a three-minute presentation about their evaluation.

The students were coached by Dr. Michael Cockram, Chair of Animal Welfare, and Dr. Katy Proudfoot, Director, Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre.

The students' participation in the contest was funded by the SJDAWC with support from the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare and the AVMA.



Karen Yetman

"I am incredibly honoured to have come in first place in the veterinary division and will take forward my new welfare assessment skills in my future. This experience has provided me with a logical method of approaching welfare assessment, enhanced my communication skills, and fostered a desire to continue further animal welfare education."

Karen Yetman



Lindsey Bailey



Nima Morandy



Dr. Hannah Hone

2020 CHRISTOFOR AWARD IN ANIMAL WELFARE

Dr. Hanna Hone, AVC Class of 2021, received the 2020 Christofor Award in Animal Welfare for her long-standing interest in improving the welfare of animals. She is a regular interactive participant in AVC Animal Welfare Club lunch lectures and events, and executive member for the International Veterinary Medicine Club. Hannah was a member of the AVC team that participated in the 17th annual Intercollegiate Animal Welfare Judging and Assessment Contest at Iowa State University. As a member of the team, she developed her public speaking capabilities and debating skills. She hopes to transfer these niche communication skills to her future profession as a mobile vet.

2020 DR. TOM A. W. TAYLOR SCHOLARSHIP

The 2020 Dr. Tom A.W. Taylor scholarship was awarded to Courtney Walsh, AVC Class of 2022. The scholarship is awarded in memory of Dr. Tom A. W. Taylor to a student who is well rounded and academically proficient and has demonstrated initiative and interest in research activities. After graduation, Courtney hopes to do a residency in comparative medicine and research so she can work alongside top researchers who seek to identify key mechanisms that lead to numerous conditions affecting the health and welfare of both humans and companion animals.



Courtney Walsh and "Samar Al Jood"

To find out how to apply for these scholarships, please visit our website at <https://awc.upei.ca/student/>



Allison Morse

2021 SJDAWC VETERINARY SUMMER RESEARCH AWARD

Congratulations to Allison Morse, AVC Class of 2024, for receiving the 2021 SJDAWC Veterinary Summer Research Award. Allison will work on a project that aims to enhance canine welfare by improving handling approaches during routine veterinary visits. It is her hope that this research will shift the mindset of practicing clinicians and encourage a new standard of practice. She is very excited to start working on this project with Drs. Karen Overall and Camille Squair.

SJDAWC

PROMOTING ANIMAL WELFARE THROUGH RESEARCH, SERVICE, AND EDUCATION

THANK YOU TO THE CHRISTOFOR AND THE SIR JAMES DUNN FOUNDATIONS

We gratefully acknowledge the sustained financial support of The Christofor and The Sir James Dunn Foundations, without which the SJDAWC would not exist.

We also thank the Pegasus Family Foundation through the Silicon Valley Pegasus Project, and the many generous organizations, individuals, veterinary hospitals, and other businesses, too numerous to mention, that have made donations in memory of a beloved pet. You can find a list of our donors on our webpage: <https://awc.upei.ca/>

To learn how you can support the Centre, please check out our website.



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